INTERIOR FURNISHING OF THE BARRIO HOUSE

The typical Caticugan dwelling has two rooms--the *sala* or the living, dining bed-room, and kitchen. Sometimes the kitchen is completely separated from the *sala* but there may be only a partial partition. Some dwellings have a third room, a combined bedroom and storage space. Normally this room lacks beds and is used mainly to store boxes of clothing, sleeping mats, grain or other household equipment. Rarely do the "bedrooms" have windows; most barriofolk believe that night air is not healthy. In the *poblacion* many *principalia* shutter their bedroom windows when they retire; another reason is to discourage thieves. However, fresh air circulates through the loose walls and the slat floors.

In Caticugan the *sala* usually has a table and one or more wooden benches; sometimes benches of bamboo are fixed to the wall. Very few chairs occur in *barrio* dwellings although they are quite common in better houses in the *poblacion*. In two houses, one in Barrio Caticugan and the other in Naga, Singer sewing machines were seen. Most houses have a few pictures on the walls. The walls of the *sala* may be covered with colored illustrations from newspapers and magazines, mostly of American origin, and pictures of Filipino movie stars from the Cebuano-dialect magazine, *Bisaya*.[4]

[4] *Bisaya* is the most widely read dialect magazine in Siaton; it is a weekly, published in Manila, with a 1954 circulation of 2,973 in Negros Oriental. The magazine, first started in 1946, contains short stories, comics,

Calendars with pictures of the Holy Family or religious scenes are common in the dwellings; these calendars are distributed free by Dumaguete Chinese merchants. Photographs are fairly typical--pictures of weddings, funerals, relatives, school graduations, etc. A few houses had an aparado, a chest cupboard, often with glass doors.

Every Caticugan dwelling had a family or domestic altar. In some cases the altar was merely a religious picture or a cheap plaster figure of a saint placed on a small shelf or, in one case, on the top of a trunk. A few altars were quite elaborate with two or three religious figures and pictures, vases (often beer bottles) for flowers, and paper cut-out or tinfoil decorations. Some altars have a small tin container filled with coconut oil with a wick made from a twist of kapok or native cotton.[5] The most elaborate altar in Caticugan belonged to two unmarried brothers who lived together; both young men were considered to be bayutes, highly feminine-acting men.

Little care is given most altars; they are often dirty and disarranged. During a novena or the fiesta, however, the altars are cleaned, rearranged and fresh flowers put in the vases.

4 (Continued) and several pages of current events. Personal communication to the writer from Mr. B. Canete, Circulation Manager, Liwayway Publications, Inc., Manila, April 3, 1954. Typescript.

5 There are two varieties of tree cotton in Caticugan, gapas gamay and gapas dako; both were identified as Gossypium brasiliense Macf. Also see Brown, op. cit., II, pp. 401-3.

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What I have called "bedrooms" is something of a misnomer; "bedroom-storage" might be more appropriate. In no case was there more than one bed in such a room, although the family often consisted of five or six persons. At night sleeping mats were spread on the sala or kitchen floor to accommodate all the members of the family. Beds are raised bamboo platforms with a woven bamboo or rattan mesh over which is put the sleeping mat. Pillows are made of red cotton cloth or abaca fabric filled with kapok; the seeds are not removed. Women may have a few white cotton pillow cases for use when guests spend the night. Sleeping mats are rolled in the morning and placed in a corner of the room or sorted with the pillows in the rafters. There is a riddle on this activity:

In the morning they go up; at night they come down. What are they?

(Mabuntag mosaka, magabii manogpa. Unsa man?)
The answer is alugnan (the mats, pillows and coverings).

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Two homes in Caticugan used hammocks of woven rattan as beds. The dwellings of the poblacion principalia normally have beds made either by local carpenters or purchased in Dumaguete; the beds have the same woven mesh over which sleeping mats are placed. The principalia normally sleep under mosquito nets--rarely seen in the barrio.

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The space under the raised barrio house is called silong; here the plow, harrow, mortar and pestle, lumber, and firewood are stored. The nests of chickens may be

tied to the house posts and the pig's trough is usually in the silong. In a few cases the silong was enclosed with a loosely woven bamboo grill. Many houses have small porches, most of them roofed, with bamboo benches; a few potted plants grow on the porch and the corn or rice grinders (galingan) are often kept there. (See Plates LIX and LX.)[1]

Two types of grinders are made from a grey granite. One is used to grind corn into meal (bugos mais) and the other to make flour rice for rice cakes (binka).[9] Corn or rice kernels are dropped into the hole at the top of the grinder and ground between the teeth of the lower part of the mill. These grinders are gradually disappearing; most barriofolk take their corn (rarely rice) to the kerosene machine mills in the poblacion. I saw one corn grinder abandoned near a residence; the owner said she discarded it because their corn was ground in the poblacion.

Another device often seen in barrio dwellings is the kagoran that is used to shred coconut. The meat is rubbed against the iron shredder and collected below in a dish. Shredded coconut is mixed with a little water and squeezed by hand to make "cocoonut milk" used in preparing rice cakes and other foods. (See Plate LXI.)[2]

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[9] The same type of corn grinder is used by the Magahats. Oracion, op. cit., p. 85, Plate 56, illustrates the galingan (as also called by Magahats) for grinding corn. The Magahats evidently do not have the rice grinder used in Caticugan

1 (See p. 661 ff, cat. 412 or 116 -- Analyst)

2 (this plate is missing -- Analyst)

House Wall Types

Besides wood there are three types of house walls in Caticugan. Bamboos are pounded until they are quite flat; they are then cut along one side, spread out and lashed or nailed as walling (sasa). A second type of walling, siklat, is a loose basket weave of thin pieces of bamboo. These two types of walls are often built around the kitchen since they are less inflammable than nipa. The most common type of exterior house wall is nilogpit that is made of nipa. (See Plates LXVII and LXVIII.)[1] The vertical patobo (Plate LXVII, 7) have slits in their sides into which thin pieces of bamboo (logpit) are inserted. Nipa leaves are placed between the logpits and then tied to the liligans. Sometimes wire is used to lash the liligans and nipa instead of rattan.

The next step is to install the partitions (salud) if the dwelling is to be divided into rooms. The earth hearth is built and the altar (artal) constructed. A shelf (pantaran), that often extends outward from the kitchen wall, is made for the large clay water jar. A bamboo ladder is built to climb to the doorway.

Barriofolk said some changes in their dwellings have occurred since the "old days." In the past the roof was steeper, there was no porch or balcony, nor wooden shutters that slide in grooves. Bamboo floor slats were never nailed but always tied with rattan and no cement, wire, or bolts were used. As for furnishing there were no clay pot rests (hornos), mirrors, chairs or chinaware;

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1 [See p. 687 4 cat. 342 or 335 -- Analyst]

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basins were made of wood instead of the tin ones used today. No one had Coleman lanterns for light.

HOUSE-WARMING CEREMONY

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When a new dwelling is finished it is customary to hold a novena to bless the house and its occupants; during the ninth (and last) evening of the novena a taktak ug bokbok occurs. When the prayers are over, the guests jump up and down on the floor "to make the destructive bokbok beetles fall to the ground." Some smoke rattan lashings with the sap of the salngan tree or soot from a lamp as a termite preventative.

No taktak ug bokbok was held during my visit; the dwelling must be completed. In Talo-ot, for example, one family had been living in their house for more than a year but the kitchen was unfinished. The "house warming" was not held "because our house is not finished. We must wait."[24]

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If visitors sleep in a dwelling the first night it is occupied they must continue to sleep in the house for

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[24]A story is reported from Guindulman, Bohol, of the young married couple who moved into a new dwelling. The husband's mother-in-law advised them to eat meagerly the first three days in their new house. Only four bananas were to be cooked and eaten, one each for the husband, wife, maid and the last banana to be put in the cupboard. "'The ordeal is called a lihi,' Pemyong the husband explained. 'It sets a sort of pattern for frugal living. The limited meal of one banana and one pata [a salted black fish caught in the river] would remind us to economize always. The extra banana represents our savings which will accumulate through the years and make us rich.'" Joan Fernandez, "How to Get Rich," The Philippines Free Press, XLIII, No. 36 (September 6, 1952), pp. 22-3. This custom is unknown in Caticugan.

high, with a capacity of about 2-1/4 pounds of clean rice; the largest was 9 inches high with a capacity of 4-1/2 pounds. It took her about two days to make the large pot; four or five of the smaller ones could be made in the same time--of course, after the clay had been gathered and prepared for working.

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BURI WEAVING

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Weaving of buri (Cebuano: buli) palm bags and sleeping mats is the most widespread of all handicrafts in the Siaton River valley. Large buri bags (baluyut), four or five feet high, serve to store rice or shelled corn. Smaller bags (bolugasan) are used to carry shelled corn to the poblacion mills for grinding for storage. Sleeping mats (banig) are about three to five feet in width and four to six feet in length. Plate LXX,[1] A and B, shows the type of weave used for making both the bags and sleeping mats. Drawing B (Plate LXX) shows how the edges of the sleeping mats are finished. Weaving buri bags and mats is strictly a woman's job, although men cut the fronds.

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Preparing the Buri for Weaving

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Unopened immature buri fronds are cut from the tree's crown. The best time to cut the fronds was said to be the period of the new moon; if gathered at any other time the fronds are very brittle and difficult to weave. After the unopened fronds are cut, they are pulled apart and placed, fan-like, on the ground to dry for two or three days.

1 [See p. 703, Cat. 285, or 116 -- Analyst]